

Front Page Edit Page Other Page

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Libel Charged

Editor Plain Dealer — Sir:

When an amiable idiot comes up to me and tells me that after due consideration, he has come to the conclusion that the moon is made of green cheese, I do not protest, for I am prepared to let him indulge in such lunacy. However, when a not-so-amiable lunatic tells me that President Eisenhower, the late Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, his brother, the present head of the C.I.A., the Chief Justice of the United States, two former presidents, heaven knows how many members of Congress, governors of states, ministers, college professors, and most everybody else are Communists, secret or otherwise, I am not indulgent. The stock reply that everyone has a right to his own opinion won't do.

No one has a right to an opinion involving the character and integrity of another unless he is prepared publicly to state the evidence on which such an opinion is based. The founder and "fuehrer" of the John Birch Society is guilty of universal libel and should be required to defend himself and his associates and followers. Common honesty and decency demand this.

One of the announced policies of this organization is to imitate Communist techniques in defeating communism: Infiltration, subversion, distortion, indiscriminate attack, and the

use of informers. Leaving aside the obvious comment that infiltration is the sincerest flattery, what does this mean as this society proceeds with its program and where does it stop? How easy it will be to move over to the advocacy of the denial of all rights to every minority, to the suppression of the freedom of speech and of the press, to the establishment of a secret police, and to the abolition of due process of law and of free elections. Then we shall have a monolithic state. It makes little difference whether the poor devil of a citizen lives under the dictatorship of the proletariat or of the John Birches. In either case the citizen has lost his freedom.

It is with alarm that I note the involvement of Gen. Edwin A. Walker, a U.S. division commander in West Germany, in this sorry business. Every dictatorship from ancient times down, has enlisted the support of the military for without that support a dictatorial power cannot be sustained. One of the absolute prerequisites of freedom is the supremacy of the civil over the military power. After long centuries of struggle, the English speaking people have embedded that principle in their fundamental law. Without it every ambitious rascal who could count on the army has hoisted himself into power and maintained himself there as long as he had military support.

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